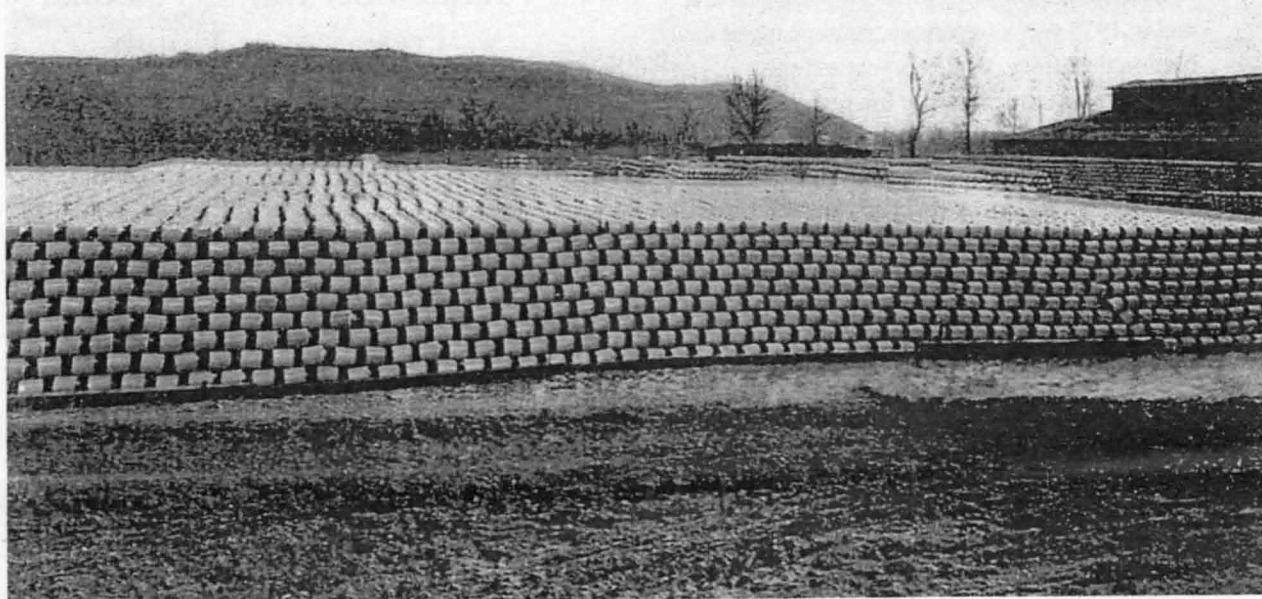




A Field Day for Carry A. Nation: Remarkable View of Inventory at the The Ransbottom Brothers Pottery, Roseville, Ohio

100,000 One Gallon Jugs at The Ransbottom Bros. Pottery Co., Roseville, O.

5931



An inventory of 100,000 Bristol-and-Albany slip-glazed one gallon stoneware jugs at the Ransbottom Brothers Pottery Company in this undated postcard. [Postcard courtesy of James L. Murphy.]

By James L. Murphy

This striking postcard view shows an inventory of 100,000 Bristol-and-Albany slip-glazed one gallon stoneware jugs at the **Ransbottom Brothers Pottery Company** in Roseville. Although unused and undated, the card must date after 1907 when the company was incorporated and before 1920 when it became a part of **Robinson-Ransbottom**.

Unfortunately, not enough of the pottery building is shown in the photograph to be certain about the exact spot the jugs were stockpiled. Part of a clerestory-style roof is shown and it is thought that the jugs may have been stacked on the southwest side of the building.

Close inspection of the photograph indicates that while the sides of these jugs were white, Bristol-glazed, the tops were probably glazed with brown Albany slip.

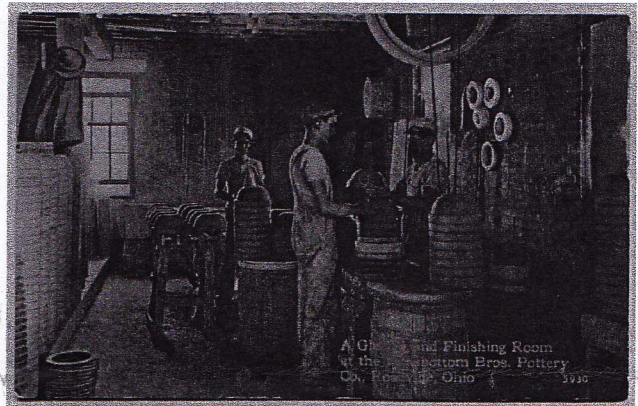
As such, these one gallon jugs were generally not marked; only with 2 gallon and larger sizes was the stenciled four-leaf clover design commonly applied to **Ransbottom** products. So today an individual jug might not be distinguished from similar products of, say, the **Nelson McCoy** plant in Roseville, the **Logan Pottery Company**, or even Illinois potteries such as **Whitehall** and **Monmouth**.



As for how long it took to amass this stack of jugs, statistics are not easily found. It is known that in August, 1913, **Ransbottom Brothers** shipped a total of 190 cars, which was an average of seven cars per working day (*Brick and Clay Record* 43(6)). Clearly we are not dealing with the 40 hour work week here. As for the capacity of a railroad car, the only estimate I have found is 6,000 gallons per car, which would equate with about 16-17 cars, which in turn would require filling a carload about every other day to account for these 100,000 jugs. However the task is calculated, this postcard view underscores the fact that this is a lot of one gallon jugs to be making, moving, and selling all at one time.

Before dismissing this achievement with the observation that the work was done before Prohibition, which might explain the demand for the product, remember that containers like these were not all headed to the distilleries. Such jugs were used to contain a variety of corrosive chemicals, of which whiskey was only one. As a case in point, the nearby **Nelson McCoy** pottery in Roseville found it newsworthy to report in 1918 that the "Government" had purchased fifty five gallon jugs to contain embalming fluid enough to embalm several thousand bodies, according to the news announcement (*Brick and Clay Record* April 9, 1918), a rather somber note as it undoubtedly referred at least in part to the casualties of World War I.

Nearly ten years later, **Nelson McCoy** was reporting the best season of any during the last twenty-five years, with great demand for 6 and 8 gallon jars, "suspected to be used for the manufacturing of home brew. A great many of the 50 gallon size jars it is suspected are being used by bootleggers" (*Ceramic Industry*, September, 1927).



These photos appear to have been taken during the same time-frame as the 100,000 One-Gallon Jug postcard. Photo top reads "Manufacturing Department ..." 5934; Photo middle reads "Glaze and Finishing Room ..." 5930; and Photo bottom reads "Forming Large Ware ..." 5933. [Photos provided courtesy of the Roseville Historical Society.]